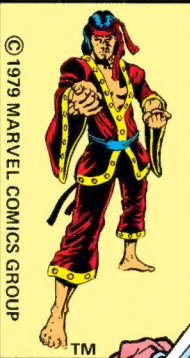


40¢ 81 OCT 02449

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



© 1979 MARVEL COMICS GROUP



THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU



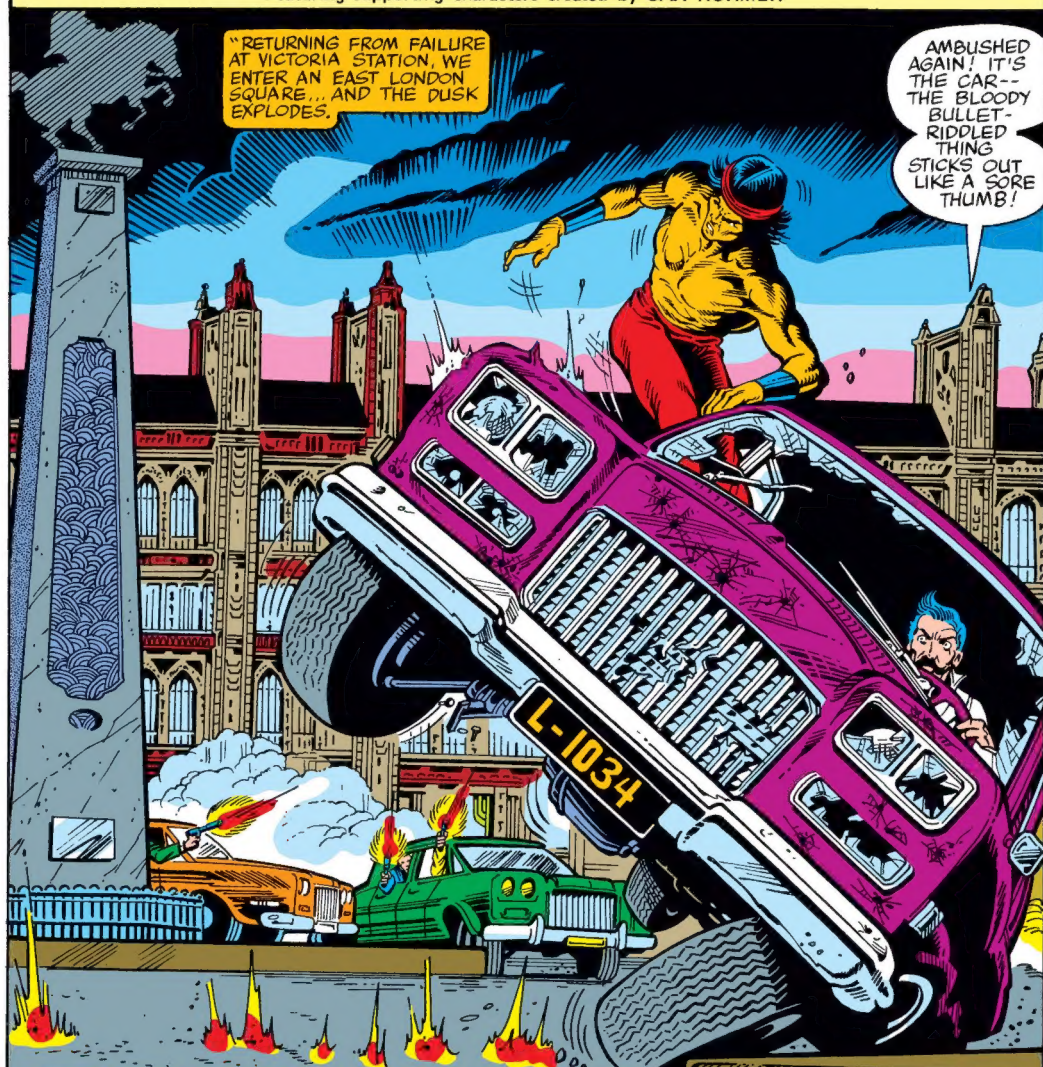
"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. Since then, I have learned that my father is Dr. Fu Manchu, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my name.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**®

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

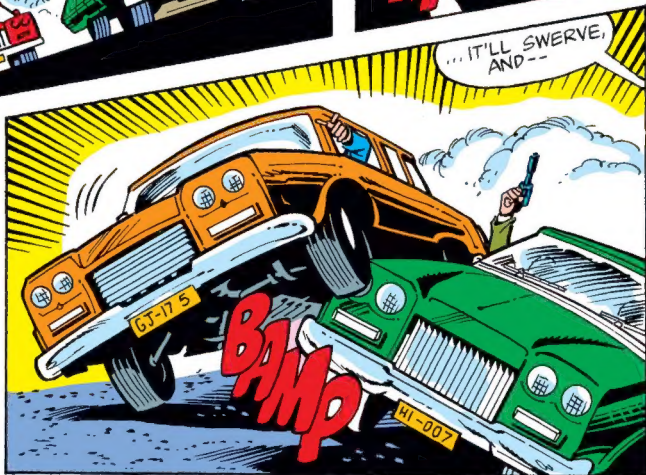
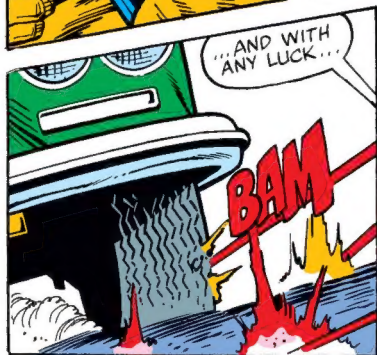
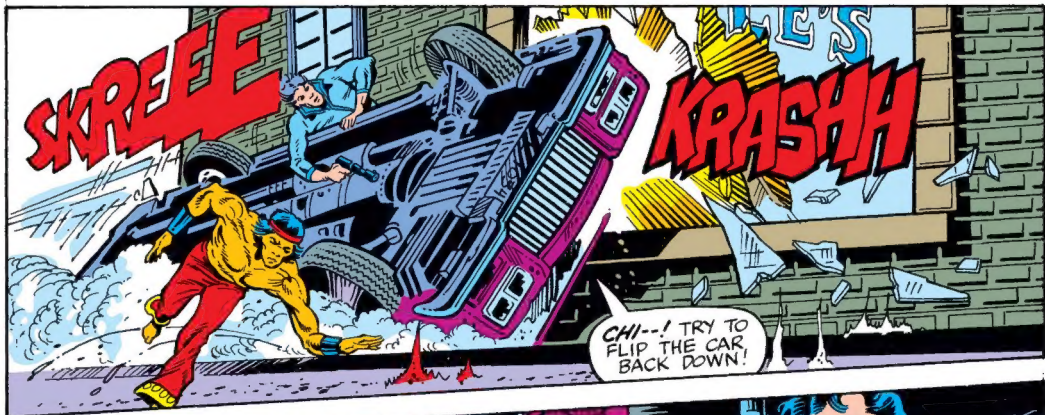
"RETURNING FROM FAILURE AT VICTORIA STATION, WE ENTER AN EAST LONDON SQUARE... AND THE DUSK EXPLODES."

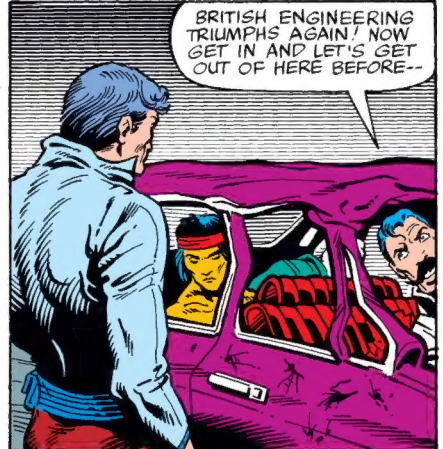
AMBUSHED AGAIN! IT'S THE CAR-- THE BLOODY BULLET-RIDDLED THING STICKS OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB!



BREATHLESS

DOUG MOENCH / MIKE ZECK / GENE DAY / JIM NOVAK, LETTERER / ROGER STERN / JIM SHOOTER
WRITER / PENCILER / INKER / G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST / EDITOR / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF







...SAME KIND OF KNIFE LEEKS TOOK IN THE BACK...THROWN BY THE LEOPARD-CULT GENTLEMEN WHO ATTACKED CHI IN THE TRAIN TUNNEL.

WHICH REMINDS ME, HOW IS LEEKS BACK THERE?

STILL DEAD.

DON'T REMIND ME...

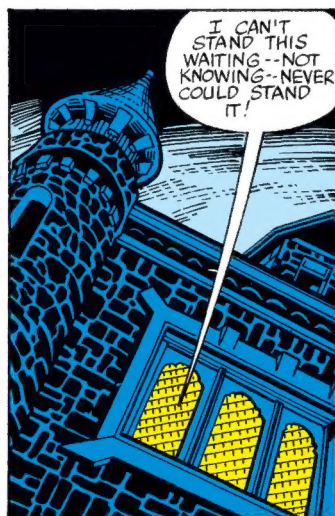


WE'VE REALLY BLOWN *THIS* CAPER, CAR SLASHED TO RIBBONS--OUR CONTACT MAN DEAD--AND NOTHIN' TO SHOW FOR IT BUT A BLOODY MEANINGLESS *RIDDLE*.

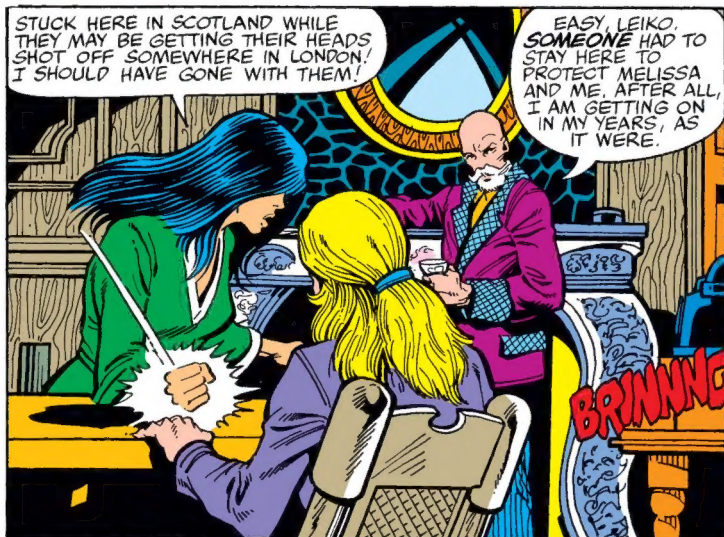


YES... "HANEMARAK IN TWO THREES... CHEMIST'S RAINBOW BIRD... AT DAWN." LEEK'S RIDDLE MEANS NOTHING TO US, BUT SUPPOSEDLY A GREAT DEAL TO SMITH. I SUGGEST WE RING HIM.

IF WE CAN REACH A PHONE-BOX IN ONE PIECE.



I CAN'T STAND THIS WAITING--NOT KNOWING--NEVER COULD STAND IT!



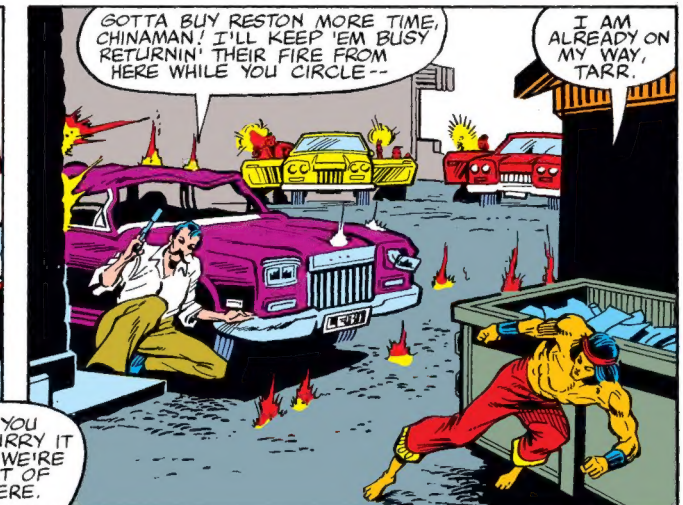
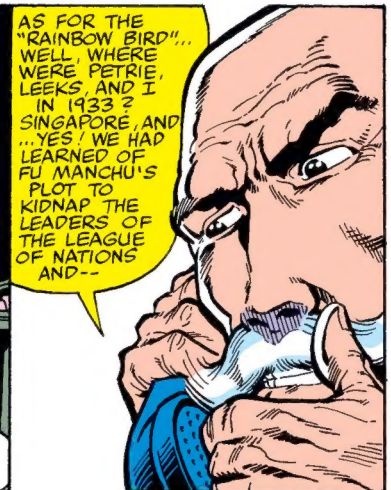
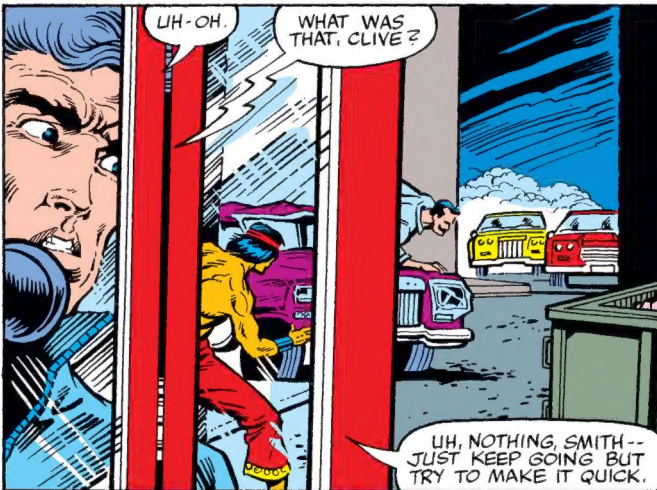
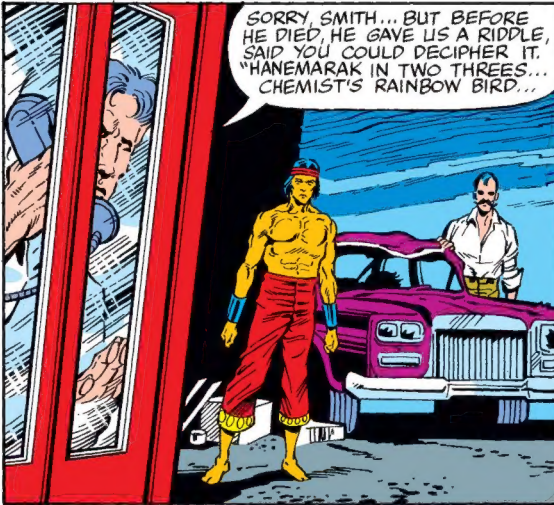
STUCK HERE IN SCOTLAND WHILE THEY MAY BE GETTING THEIR HEADS SHOT OFF SOMEWHERE IN LONDON! I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH THEM!

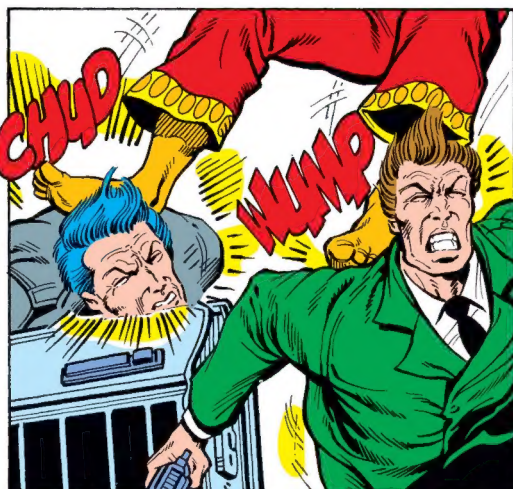
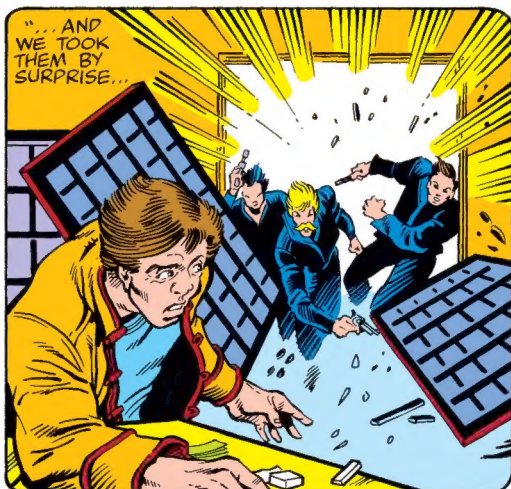
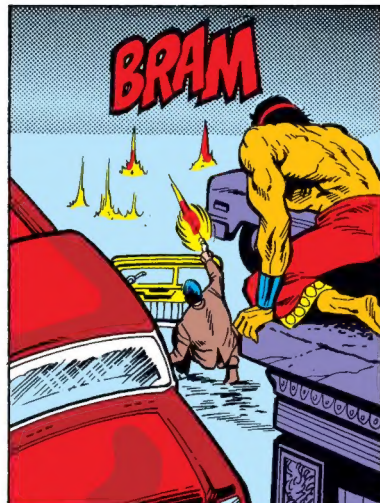
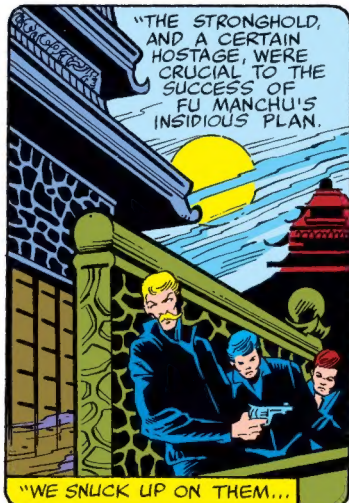
EASY, LEIKO, *SOMEONE* HAD TO STAY HERE TO PROTECT MELISSA AND ME. AFTER ALL, I AM GETTING ON IN MY YEARS, AS IT WERE.

BRINING

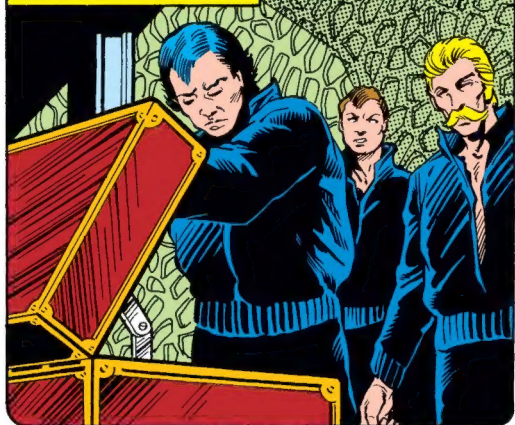


YES? YES, CLIVE...YES... *WHAT?!* GOOD LORD! LYMAN LEEKS IS *DEAD?!*





"PETRIE IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT THE RESCUE OF THEIR VITAL HOSTAGE, WHO WAS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM, YOU SEE, HE HAD WON IN MORE THAN ONE WAY..."



"...FOR, THE HOSTAGE WAS NONE OTHER THAN KARAMENAH --PETRIE'S BRIDE."



"IN GRATITUDE, SHE PRESENTED HIM WITH A STATUE OF A PEACOCK. THEREFORE--"



--THE PEACOCK IS THE "RAIN-BOW BIRD" GIVEN BY KARAMENAH, OR "HANEMARAK," TO HER HUSBAND PETRIE, THE "CHEMIST" AS A MEMENTO OF OUR VICTORY IN 1933, THE "TWO THREES". NOW, THE STATUE WAS LATER DONATED BY PETRIE TO THE LONDON MUSEUM...

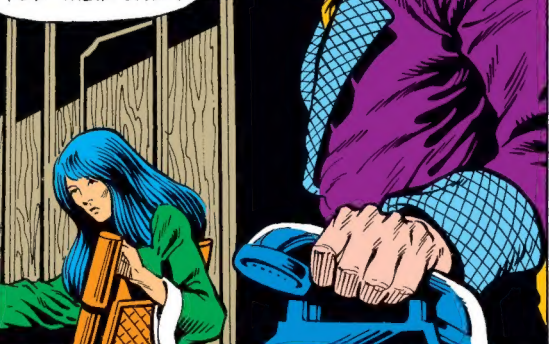


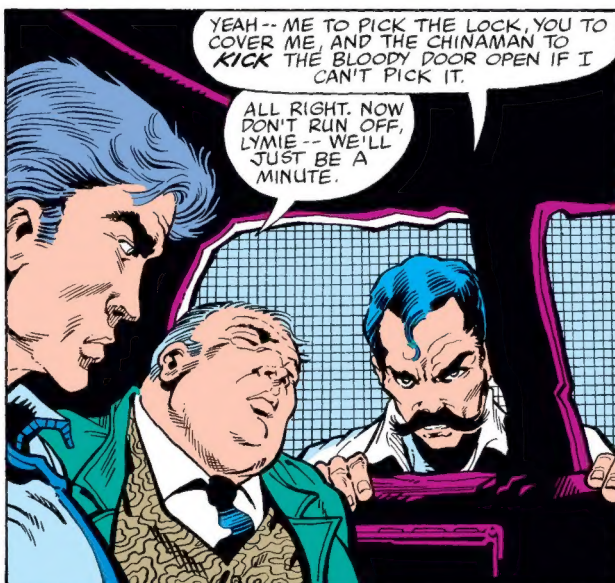
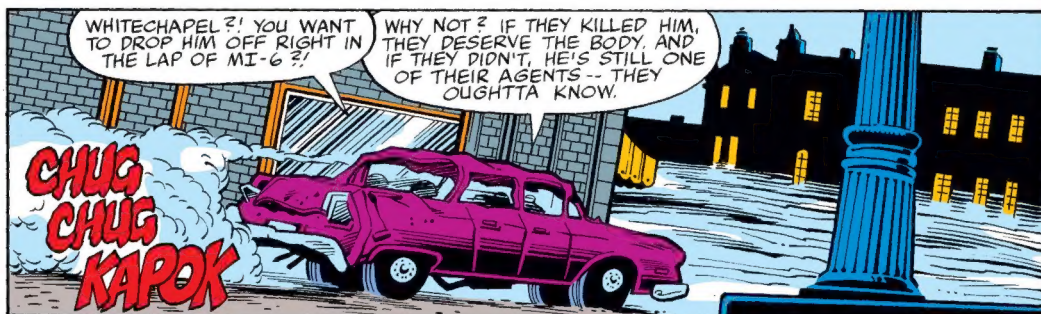
"...SO YOU MUST GET OVER THERE AND SEE THAT PEACOCK BY DAWN--THE LAST PIECE OF THE PUZZLE."

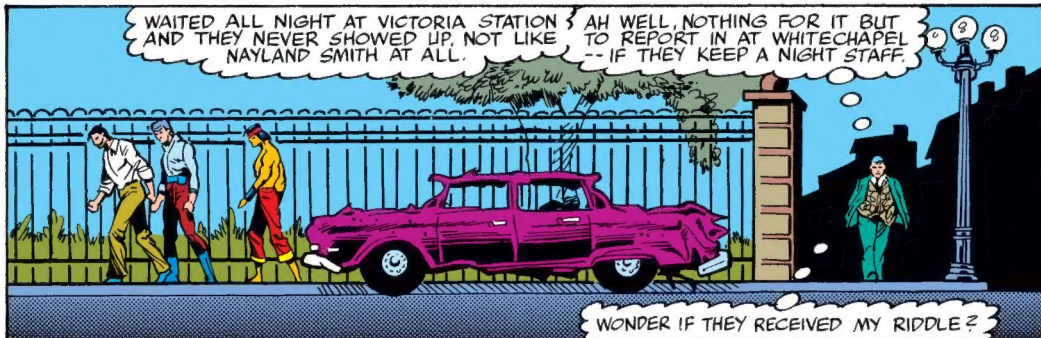


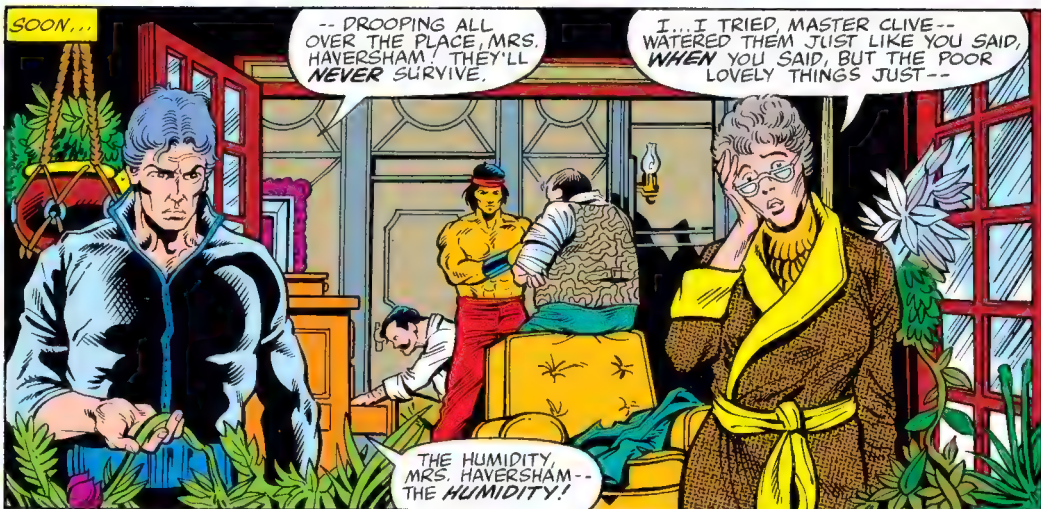
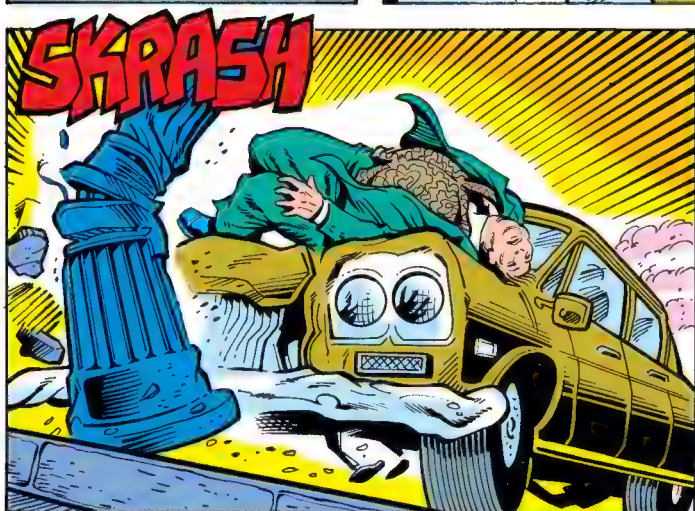
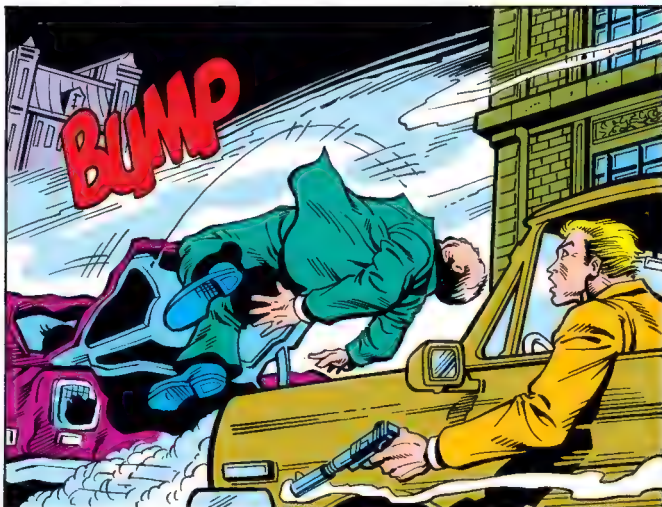
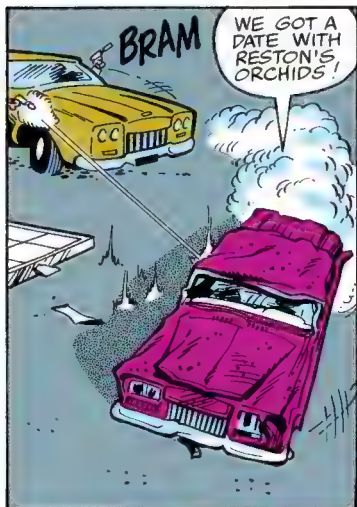
HALLELUJAH, THANKS, SMITH-- GOT TO RING OFF NOW.

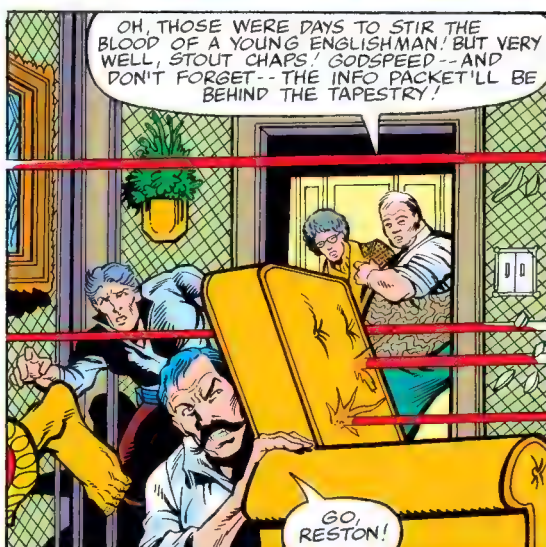
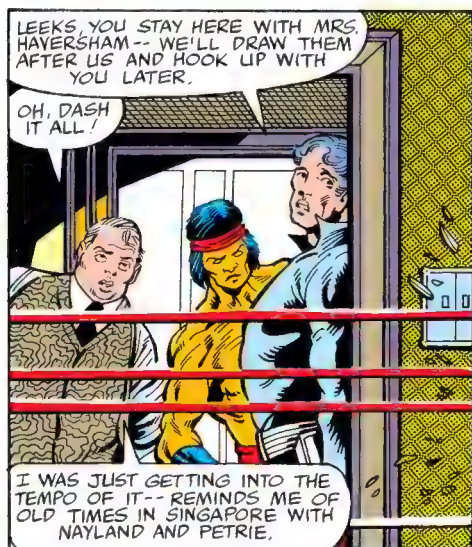
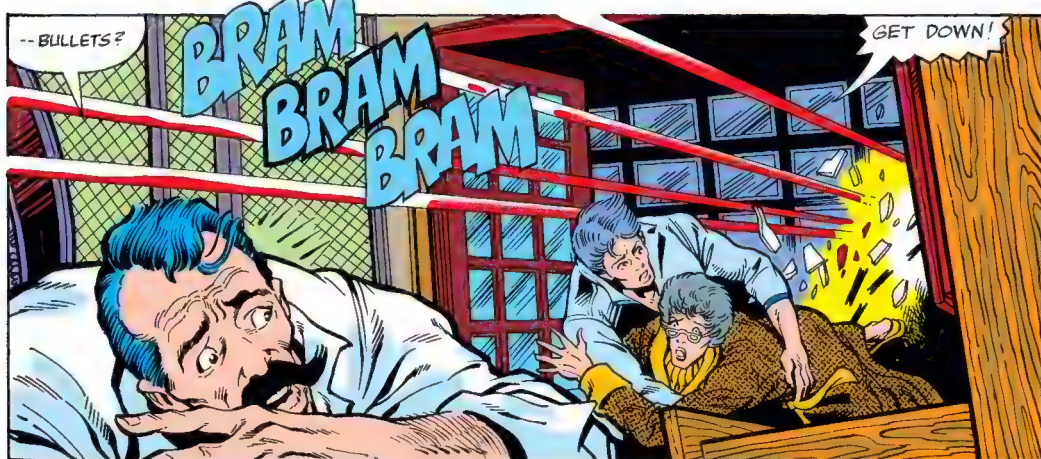
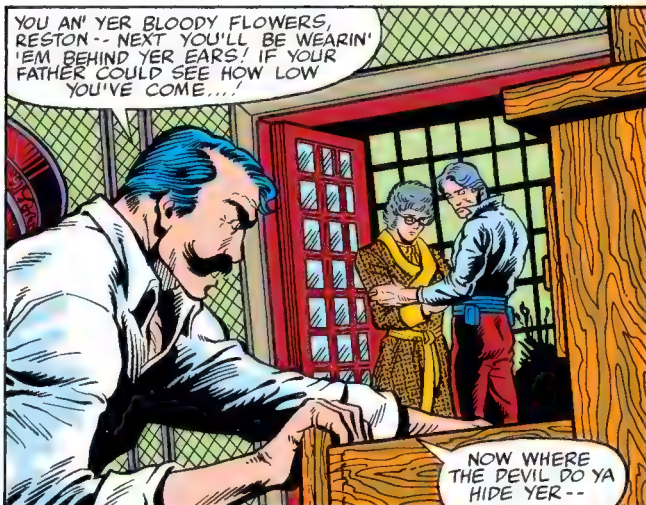
-- TO THE LONDON MUSEUM, LEIKO, RIGHT NOW I'VE A HUNCH THEY'LL NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN WE DO. APPARENTLY, EVERY ASSASSIN IN LONDON IS OUT FOR THEIR LIVES.



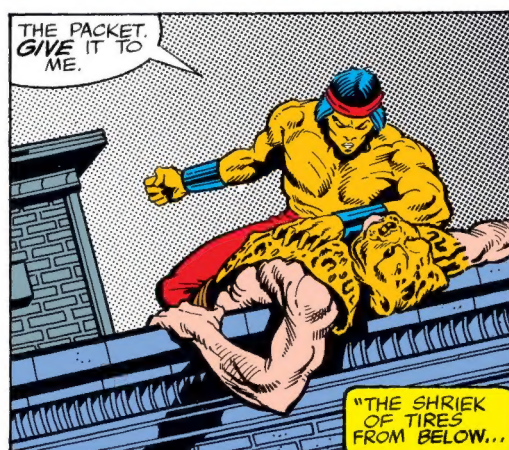
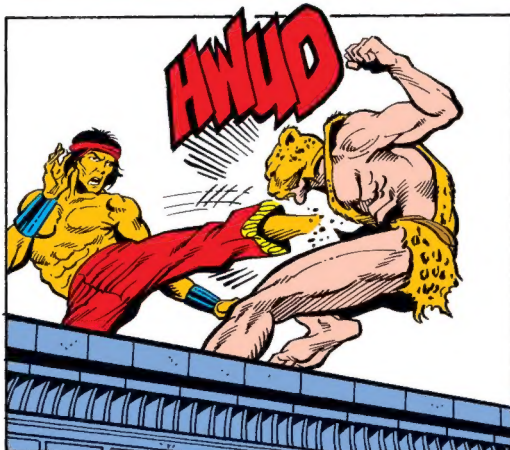
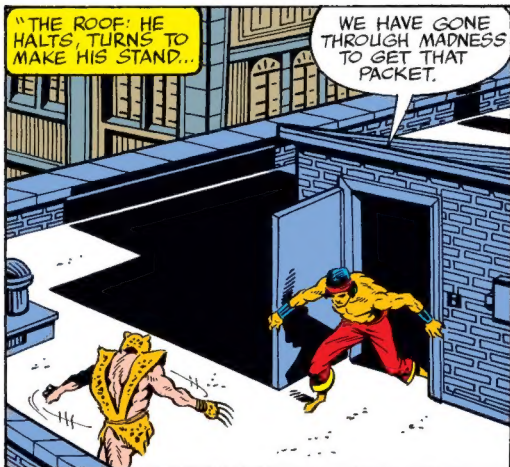












"MI-6 AGENTS--AGAIN!"

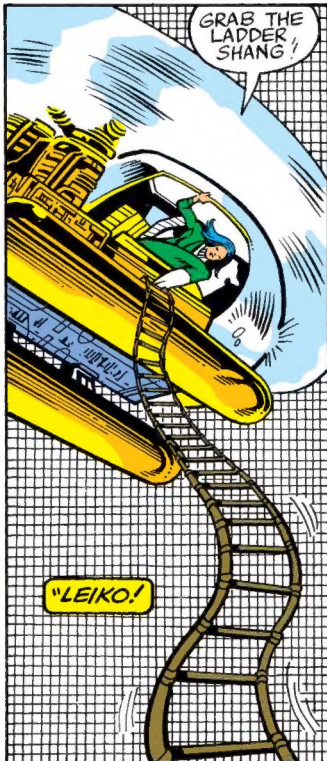


"IT SEEMS THAT EVERYONE HAS PIERCED THE SECRET OF LEEKS' RIDDLE... BUT NOW--"



"--A SOUND FROM ABOVE."

GRAB THE LADDER, SHANG!



"SHE SWERVES THE HELICOPTER, AND I BECOME A MOVING, SWINGING, TWISTING TARGET-- BUT STILL, IF THEY CONTINUE FIRING, SOONER OR LATER--"



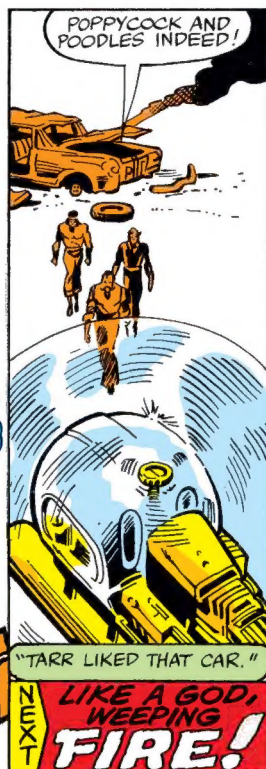
HANG ON, SHANG, WHILE I TAKE CARE OF THOSE THUGS IN THE STREET--



--AND THEN I'LL LET YOU DOWN!



"FAR FROM THE BLOSSOMING GAS, I HOPE."



MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

ROGER STERN
EDITOR
JIM SALICRUP
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MOKF seems to have a knack for eliciting what, in the Bullpen, is called "the special letter"—the kind of reader response which transcends normal praise or criticism, which indeed breaks down all barriers on its clean true path to the very roots of give and take. It is with honor, and no false immodesty, that we print the following missive as the most recent example of this very special form of communication. . .

Dear Doug,

I find fewer and fewer things in our popular culture that attempt to inspire an emotional response in me, and even fewer which succeed in doing so. Bruce Springsteen's music is a shining example of one such experience; when I hear him sing "Backstreets" or "Badlands," it's as if he is redefining the state of "soul," and I am discovering myself for the first time. As a child, I was affected similarly by comicbooks, for I was discovering myself, literally waking up from unconsciousness. But something changed with the years. I continued to grow, but the comics stopped. I still read them, always hoping for that old joy, but, with the exception of very rare meaningful books, I never got much more than sensational fantasy—and even that grew tiresome after a while. Still, I could not give up, and kept telling myself: *Something* has got to happen, sooner or later. And so, I kept searching for that anima.

And now, much later, something finally has come along which is possessed of that vital force informing any real work of art: Two of your comics, Doug, namely MOKF #s 71 and 76. . . coincidentally purchased simultaneously.

To borrow a phrase from Cat Yronwode, the reason I read comics (or pursue any artform) is to discover "that golden kernal of truth about the human heart." I look not merely for sensation, but emotion. And although it is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish the two, we must do so, if only to preserve our humanity. The media constantly glut our senses and sensibilities with slick stimuli that rarely get to the core of any real feeling. But perhaps this is acceptably within the scheme of things, for when something *does* ring deeply true, I am taken aback, struck with an auroral optimism, and pulled back into the flow.

Recently, I found it necessary to relocate from California and the move has produced some insecurities in me; the pieces of my life must now be realigned, repatterned—not an easy task. So you may well understand why a story such as "Nigh-Times" comes as a welcome objectification of my own soul. Doug, your overriding parable of the jigsaw puzzle in this story was perfect on every level, despite its obviousness. As Shang-Chi says on page 21, "...if the spirit remains true, the symbol can never be false." Shang's spiritual searching, the real heart of MOKF, is again the central theme here, as well as in issue #76. The Brynrock issues were a bizarrely amusing diversion, but I'm glad you're getting back to the meat. The symbolic structure of the opening scene in #76 reads as something drawn from inside me. I am fascinated by smoke, intrigued by beads, and sickened by the violent shedding of lifeblood. How you weave these metaphors into the story is a credit to your own spirit. The paradigm of this symbolism in "Smoke, Beads, and Blood" comes on page 6, where the Tao is again shattered. After everything said and depicted up to that point, the effect is profound, for me as well as for Shang-Chi. I, too, sometimes feel similarly torn and unsure of my spiritual growth, and I likewise know that if there can be anything akin to "universal peace, solitary tranquility," it must come of a union with yin—my anima, to use the word now in the Jungian sense. You have reached not just the heart, Doug, but the soul.

"NighTimes" (is the serious play on "nigh-times" inten-

tional?) was a touching love story transcending superficial soap opera. I actually felt every emotion along with Leiko and Shang. And when Fate stepped in, as it inevitably does, destroying the tenuous peace of the scene, I was shocked and scattered myself, like the pieces of a broken jigsaw puzzle. With the main body of this issue as an emotional foundation, the final reflections of Shang, and the reprised intrusion of the "violent wind," are not just literary echoes but glimpses of the bare soul of fiction. In truth, there *are* no answers, merely situations—"we do as we must"—you will never break the chain. These are simple, even facile phrases, I know, but when animated by a reality that is lived fully, they take on a spirit of their own. By creating incidents and situations with that same spirit, you have realized the paradox that underlies all true communication. You have shown me myself in a new light. I thank you for the experience.

On a less emotional, yet equally essential level, these two stories belong to that rare species of comicbook I'd be proud to show to any of my "non-comicbook-fan" friends. This is as much to Mike Zeck's credit as it is to yours. His layouts are growing more and more exciting with each issue. And now, with the addition of Gene Day's inks (permanent?—I hope so), his art is strong enough to stand with Gulacy's best. (I hate to make such comparisons—however fine past work may have been, it is still past—but Paul's excellent illustrations are not easily forgotten.)

In closing, let me voice my trepidations as to the worthiness of this letter. I realize it's unfair for a fan to have expectations of an artist; the artist is responsible only to himself and his integrity. In certain senses, any criticism—especially that which is highly complimentary—becomes self-serving. But the impulse to share one's emotions or reactions with the person who generated them is just too strong to ignore. Therefore, the above is offered in the spirit of honest artifice, hoping that it has revealed something of myself to you. Were I nearby, I'd invite you over for tea and Springsteen; as it is, Doug, I can only ask that you accept my praise as sincere.

Raymond Orkwis

406 Alice St.

Pittsburgh, PA 15210

There's not much we can say in reply, except to repeat that both Mike and Doug were truly honored by your letter, Raymond. And anything we might add, it seems, would have to be done in person.

In the meantime, and until next issue, be good.

